


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	MC	Date:	27/01/2026	Manager:	LH	Date:	3/2/26
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Application Ref:	3/2025/0889			 <p>Ribble Valley Borough Council</p> <p>www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</p>
Date Inspected:	07/01/2026	Site Notice:	18/12/2025	
Officer:	MC			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				REFUSAL

Development Description:	Erection of a part single-storey and part two-storey dwelling of exceptional design quality (NPPF 84e) with associated landscaping, habitat restoration, change of use of land to residential curtilage and access from Higher Road, together with the creation of a small visitor car park for members of the public to view the remains of the Roman road to be preserved within the site.(resubmission of application 3/2025/0095)
Site Address/Location:	Land at Higher Road Longridge PR3 2YX

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No representations received in respect of the proposal.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Archaeology:	<p>The Historic Environment Unit notes the submitted Lidar aerial surveys that show a linear feature crossing the site on the line of the Roman road.</p> <p>They also note that the revised landscape plan includes a 'haha', a type of ditch with a vertical wall on the "inside" and a sloping face on the "outside" to provide a stockproof barrier between the domestic garden area and the more agricultural and rewilded area of the site. The excavations required for this will inevitably damage the Roman road on the route of the ha-ha. As stated in of the DBA the only known remains that would be impacted by the present plans are post medieval trackways and possible ridge and furrow, although there is still a potential for as-yet unknown buried remains to be affected. There is no indication that any such remains would be of national importance and thus merit preservation at the expense of development, but precautionary archaeological works will still be necessary.</p> <p>The above can be secured by condition so no excavation works or ground disturbance are undertaken until a programme of archaeological works is secured and submitted to the LPA.</p> <p>They also note that landscape or agricultural works to restore the surrounding hay meadows or 'restore/rewild' the landscape in the immediate vicinity of the Roman road should not include anything that would potentially damage the remains of the road. The planting of trees, shrubs etc. should avoid the identified road corridor and not allow or encourage root spread into or 'scrubbing up' of the road corridor. Any proposed planting of wildflower species should be by seeding or the use of small plant plugs with minimal intrusion into the ground in the area of the Roman road.</p>

LCC Highways:	<p>The Local Highway Authority raises no objection subject to the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and retention of the car parking areas prior to first occupation • Retention of the garage for the parking of vehicles • No use to commence until visibility splays provided • Surfacing of access prior to first use • Submission of drainage strategy • Positioning of new gates/walls • Submission of Construction Management Plan
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CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
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9 letters of representation have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The car-parking area will attract anti-social behaviour
- Proposal is not in keeping with the local vernacular and does not meet the requirements of para 84(e)
- Harmful urbanising impact
- Detrimental impact upon the character of the National Landscape
- Proposal may set a dangerous precedent for further development
- Impact(s) upon wildlife and biodiversity
- Intrusion into the landscape
- Moor Hey have not been contacted regarding the application
- Conflict with opening the roman road and potential harm from increased footfall
- Increase congestion and harm to traffic flow – existing road unsuitable for increased tourist traffic
- The vegetable garden and self sufficiency could change post-build and not be enforceable
- The property is not isolated
- The ecological surveys are inaccurate
- There are already Roman roads nearby for viewing in Ribchester
- Location poorly relates to existing infrastructure
- Fails to comply with Policy DMH3
- Application does not serve the interests of the local area
- BNG would be reliant on S106 agreements raising concerns regarding enforceability and long-term delivery

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN2: Landscape
Key Statement EN3: Sustainable Development and Climate Change
Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets
Key Statement H1: Housing Provision
Key Statement H2: Housing Balance

Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
Policy DME1: Protecting Trees & Woodland
Policy DME2: Landscape & Townscape Protection
Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets
Policy DME5: Renewable Energy
Policy DME6: Water Management
Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2025/0095

Proposed erection of a part single-storey and part two-storey dwelling of exceptional design quality (NPPF 84e) with associated landscaping, habitat restoration, change of use of land to residential curtilage and access from higher Road, together with the creation of a small visitor car park for members of the public to view the remains of the Roman road to be preserved (if feasible) within the site.

Refused

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a 3.2Ha area of greenfield agricultural land located on the southern side of Higher Road, Longridge. The site is located outside of any defined settlement limits being within the designated Forest of Bowland National Landscape with the site being defined as 'Moorland Fringe' within the Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment. The site is bounded to the north by the southern-western extents of 'Longridge Fell' which is defined as being 'Longridge Enclosed Moorland Hills' within the Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment.

The site is bounded to the west by an area of existing woodland with a small number of trees and hedgerow delineating the northern extents of the site. There is a Biological Heritage Site within the immediate vicinity of the site, Longridge Fell which is sited approximately 166 to the north-east of the site and extends round to the north of Higher Road.

The topography of the site is varied, with the land levels decreasing gradually from north to south and significant variances in levels whereby the topography of the land decreases significantly in areas of the site from east to west.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

The application seeks consent for the erection of a detached dwellinghouse including creation of access track and associated garden areas. It is proposed that the dwelling will be part single and part two storey, being of flat-roofed contemporary appearance with the first-floor element benefitting from a semi-cantilevered configuration.

The main body of ground floor of the dwelling would comprise two rectangular elements attached by an entrance hall, with an integral garage located at the front of the dwelling. The first-floor element would have a footprint measuring 17.2m by 7m. It is proposed that internally the dwelling will provide for the following:

- Integral garaging
- Gym/sauna
- Office area
- Wine Room
- Living/dining area with kitchen
- Two 'guest bedrooms' with associated en-suites
- 'Guest' lounge and 'Guest' living area (with independent kitchen)
- Two bedrooms including master dressing area and associated en-suites

A new access track would also be created off Higher Road to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian access to the dwelling with the proposal also being accompanied by detailed landscaping proposals which include a formal lawn area, a 'kitchen garden' and areas of tree, hedgerow and shrub-planting including areas to be restored as hay meadow.

The proposal additionally includes the provision of a small public car parking area to the north of the site accessed from Higher Road, sited opposite the property known as Cowley Brook Farm. It is intended that the car park will provide for public access to an area of the site where the remains of a Roman road are proposed to be excavated.

Planning permission ref: 3/2025/0095 for a very similar scheme was refused in April 2025. This application was refused for the following reasons:

1. *The proposal would result in the introduction of a form of development that fails to be in keeping with the character of the landscape or be reflective of the local vernacular, particularly in terms of scale, style and features. With the proposal resulting in a level of cumulative visual change that would result in an overt visual suburbanisation and domestication of the site, significantly undermining the character, visual amenities and sense of visual openness of the area, being of significant detriment to the inherent character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape in this location.*

As such the proposal is considered to be in significant direct conflict with Key Statement EN2, and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the aims and objectives of Para.189 of the National Planning Policy Framework, also subsequently failing to satisfy the requirements of Para.84(e) of the Framework.

2. *The proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that approval would lead to the creation of a new residential dwelling, located outside of a defined settlement boundary in an unsustainable location where future occupants would be reliant on private motor vehicle, without sufficient justification, in that it has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposal would meet any of the exception criterion inherently contained within the policy requirements or contained within Para.84(e) of the Framework.*

Further information has been submitted with this application in an attempt to overcome the reasons for refusal. This includes:

- An updated layout plan to avoid conflict with United Utilities water supply pipe
- An updated access plan
- Updated Design & Access Statement
- Updated Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal
- Correspondence between the applicant and RIBA Places Matter
- CGI Drawings

- LIDAR mapping outlining the roman road
- Counsel opinion
- Appeal decisions x4

Principle of Development:

Five Year Housing Land Supply

A recent appeal decision (appeal ref: APP/T2350/W/25/3372635) has found that the Council no longer have a Five-Year Housing Land Supply and the housing supply is calculated to be 3.45 years.

The consequence of not having a 5YHLS is that the 'tilted balance' is engaged in the decision-making process. The tilted balance refers to paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF which states that if the most relevant Local Plan policies for determining a planning application are out of date (such as when a 5YHLS cannot be demonstrated), the application should be approved unless the application of NPPF policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance (as defined by the NPPF) provide a clear reason for refusing permission or the harm caused by the application significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits, when assessed against policies of the NPPF as a whole. In this context, the policies considered to be out of date include in particular those relating to the development strategy and delivery of housing which are referred to in this report.

The NPPF at paragraph 11d) states that a presumption in favour of sustainable development means 'where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless the proposal conflicts with the policies of the Framework relating to the protection of assets or areas of importance or the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

The NPPF at paragraph 11d) footnote 7 identifies a National Landscape as a protected area and as such the tilted balance need not apply should the policies within the NPPF provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. The impacts upon the National Landscape and the need to apply the tilted balance, will be assessed in the relevant sections below.

Spatial Strategy

Key Statement DS1 relates to new housing development and seeks to direct new housing development within an identified strategic site and the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge in addition to Tier 1 Villages which are the more sustainable of the Borough's 32 defined settlements. The same policy also requires development within the Borough's remaining 23 Tier 2 Village settlements to meet proven local needs or deliver regeneration benefits.

The site is not located within a defined settlement and Policy DMG2 therefore applies.

Policy DMG2 is of some relevance which requires development within the Tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six considerations which are listed as below:

- "1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area.*
- 2. The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.*
- 3. The development is for local needs housing which meets an identified need and is secured as such.*
- 4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.*
- 5. The development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.*

6. The development is compatible with the enterprise zone designation.”

It is clear from the submitted details that the proposal could not be argued as being ‘essential to the local economy or social wellbeing of the area’ nor could it be considered that the proposal ‘is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture’.

In respect of the matter of ‘local need’, as per the previously refused scheme, no evidence has been provided to suggest that the proposal would align with the definition of ‘local needs housing’ as defined within the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which states that ‘*Local needs housing is the housing developed to meet the needs of existing and concealed households living within the parish and surrounding parishes which is evidenced by the Housing Needs Survey for the parish, the Housing Waiting List and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment*’.

Taking account of the nature of the proposal, it cannot be considered that the proposal meets any of the exception criterion contained within Policy DMG2 in relation to the creation of new dwellings outside of defined settlement limits.

Also of relevance is Policy DMH3 as the sites location outside of any defined settlement. Policy DMH3 states that:

“Within areas defined as open countryside or AONB on the proposals map, residential development will be limited to:

- 1. Development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposal for an agricultural, forestry or other essential workers dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied.*
- 2. The appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings providing they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. buildings must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.*
- 3. The creation of a permanent dwelling by the removal of any condition that restricts the occupation of dwellings to tourism/visitor use or for holiday use will be refused on the basis of sustainability.”*

Taking account of the nature of the proposal and in light of the above, it cannot be considered that the proposal meets any of the exception criterion contained within DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy in relation to the creation of new dwellings outside of defined settlement limits.

As such, taking account of the above, the proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that approval would lead to the creation of a new residential dwelling, located outside of defined settlement boundaries, without sufficient justification. It has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposal would meet any of the exception criterion inherently contained within either of the policies.

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;*
- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;*
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;*
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or*
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:*

- i. *is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and*
- ii. *would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.”*

The application relies upon the proposal satisfying the requirements of Paragraph 84(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which if met, would allow the proposal to be treated as an exception to locally adopted development plan policies that seek to restrict the creation of new residential dwellings in isolated locations or outside of settlement boundaries.

As such, should the proposal satisfy the requirements of paragraph 84(e), the identified locational conflict(s) with Policies DMG2 and DMH3, as identified above, could be outweighed by the support afforded to such development by the Framework.

In respect of the requirements of Para.84(e), it is firstly essential to give due consideration as to whether the Paragraph can be engaged in support of the proposal and whether the proposal dwelling would be ‘isolated’ for the purposes of Paragraph 84 of the Framework.

The previously refused scheme concluded that taking account of the distance of the site from the nearest ‘settlement’ it was considered that the proposed development would comply with and align with the key component of Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework in that the location and siting of the proposal would be in an ‘isolated’ location for the purposes of the Framework.

As such, paragraph 84 can be ‘engaged’ for the purposes of assessing the proposal.

Notwithstanding this matter, for full support to be afforded to the proposal by virtue of Paragraph 84, the proposal must also satisfy one or more of the exception criterion within Para.84, which in this case would be 84(e). This matter is considered further within the Visual Amenity section of this report.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states all development must:

- “1. Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.*
- 2. Provide adequate day lighting and privacy distances.*
- 3. Have regard to public safety and secured by design principles.*
- 4. Consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible.”*

The application relates to an area of Greenfield land located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. To the north of the application site are ‘Cowley Brook Cottage’ and ‘Cowley Brook Farm’.

The dwelling would be sited towards the south-western existents of the site, in a relatively remote location with no close-proximity relationship with nearby residential receptors. As such and taking account of the size and scale of the dwelling, as well as site configuration and orientation of the proposed dwelling, it is not considered that the proposal will result in any significant adverse impacts upon existing residential amenities by virtue of resultant direct overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light or overbearing impact.

Some concerns have been raised by the occupiers of neighbouring properties with regards to potential anti-social behaviour as a result of the creation of a new car park. Paragraph 3.10 of the applicants Planning Statement indicates that the car park would be locked and people wishing to visit the road would be able to book a time and will be given an access code.

It is considered that the operation and management of the car park could be secured by way of planning condition to address any concerns regarding crime or antisocial behaviour.

As such, and taking account of the above matters, the proposal does not raise any significant direct conflicts with Policy DMG1 which seeks to ensure of adequate standards of residential amenity and protect against development(s) that would result in measurable detrimental impact(s) upon nearby existing residential amenities.

Visual Amenity and Impact(s) Upon the Character of the Area:

The site is located outside of any defined settlement limits being within the designated Forest of Bowland National Landscape with the site being defined as 'Moorland Fringe' within the Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment.

As such, in assessing the visual compatibility of the proposal with the character of the immediate landscape, Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy are primarily engaged. Also of relevance is paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework given the sites location within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, with Para.189 stating that:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas”.

Firstly, Key Statement EN2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states:

“The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced. As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials”.

Policy DMG1 states that:

“In determining planning applications, all development must:

DESIGN

- 1. Be of a high standard of building design which considers the 8 building in context principles (from the CABE/English Heritage building on context toolkit.*
- 2. Be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.*
- 3. Consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.*
- 4. Use sustainable construction techniques where possible and provide evidence that energy efficiency, as described within policy DME5, has been incorporated into schemes where possible.*
- 5. the code for sustainable homes and lifetime homes, or any subsequent nationally recognised equivalent standards, should be incorporated into schemes.”*

Policy DMG2 also states that:

“Within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build.

In protecting the designated area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the council will have regard to the economic and social well-being of the area. However the most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area avoiding where possible habitat fragmentation.

Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting. The AONB management plan should be considered and will be used by the council in determining planning applications”.

The scheme as proposed under this application is identical in terms of the dwelling/landscaping as the refused scheme under planning ref: 3/2025/0095. As per the assessment in the previous application, the scheme is considered to result in the introduction of a form of development that fails to be in keeping with the character of the landscape or be reflective of the local vernacular, particularly in terms of scale, style and features. The proposal is considered to result in a level of cumulative visual change that would result in an overt visual suburbanisation and domestication of the site, significantly undermining the character, visual amenities and sense of visual openness of the area, being of significant detriment to the inherent character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape in this location.

As such, the proposal is considered to be in significant direct conflict with Key Statement EN2, and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the aims and objectives of Para.189 of the National Planning Policy Framework, also subsequently failing to satisfy the requirements of Para.84(e) of the Framework.

It is therefore appropriate to consider whether the proposal falls within the criteria outlined within Paragraph 84(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The applicant considers that the Council failed to have sufficient regard to the rigorous design process that has been followed in developing the Growing House and adopted an overly narrow consideration of the Growing House proposal by separating features such as the physical building, the landscaping and the ecological benefits, whereas NPPF 84(e) requires a holistic approach to be adopted to assess the totality of the design proposed. The Planning Statement also considers that the Council adopted a narrow approach to the consideration of the immediate setting of the Growing House, which is not limited to a visual assessment and other considerations such as ecological gains need to be considered.

Assessment:

Whether the proposal is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture

The delegated officers report for planning ref: 3/2025/0095 noted that the dwelling would be an overtly linear in its configuration, being of a contemporary flat-roofed appearance with a semi-cantilever first floor element. The report also made reference to the fact that elements of the proposed building would utilise the varying topography of the site with the eastern extents of the main body of the proposed structure being partially ‘dug-in’ to the existing topography. However, concerns were raised regarding views from the south which would result in the constructed of a raised floorplate platform which results in a somewhat overly-engineering arrangement and engineered response to the site characteristics.

The report also raised concerns that the overall architectural and elevational language of the ground floor is both stark and austere, lacking any visual devices or archetypes, save that for the fenestration arrangement,

that would afford the proposal an adequate level of depth, relief or visual interest, resulting in an overtly engineered appearance.

The delegated officers report noted that the application has been taken before and reviewed by the RIBA Places Matter Design Review Panel but did not agree with the findings that the proposed dwelling would be of an 'exceptional quality', in that it is 'truly outstanding', reflecting the highest standards in architecture'.

The applicant maintains the view that the design has been thoroughly scrutinised and rigorously tested by architectural and landscape experts to ensure that it achieves the necessary quality appropriate to its setting and demanded by its location in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, and the design review panel are satisfied, and have endorsed the proposed design, on the basis that it meets the requirements of NPPF 84(e).

The Council acknowledge that the design has been tested by architectural and landscape experts and in isolation to its setting, some elements of the scheme could constitute a high-quality design. The Council also acknowledge that some elements of the design of the scheme have taken features of its surroundings and the landscape character, for example the use of stone walls and also incorporating the retention of existing stone walls. However, there are features of the design which the Council contest is 'outstanding'.

The submitted appeal decisions acknowledge that whether the design of the dwelling is truly 'outstanding' is subjective and a matter of judgement. There are elements of the scheme which the Council raise concerns regarding. For example, the large expanses of glazing to the rear elevation at 3m in height at first floor level. In addition, the cantilevered construction emphasises the bulk and massing of the first floor. Other elements of the design such as the gradient of the solar panels in relation to the flat roof which is not considered to constitute 'outstanding' design and would not conserve the scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

Other areas which do not appear to be 'outstanding' design are the proposed hard engineered walls which make up the roof of the garage area and appear overly dominant and take away from the significance of the more agricultural features of the dwelling such as the stone walls.

A number of appeal decisions have been submitted with this application which shall be discussed throughout this report. One of which is appeal ref: APP/L1765/W/22/3291091 whereby the Inspector considered an assessment of architectural quality can go beyond the appearance of a proposed dwelling and its landscape, giving weight to the experimental nature of the construction method, together with sustainability and rainwater recycling measures. The Council acknowledges that the dwelling does have some parallels with the above appeal scheme in terms of self-sufficiency and the aim to grow and cultivate year-round fresh produce on the dwelling and within the site. Whilst these elements of the scheme may contribute to the design concept for the dwelling, it does not outweigh the harm that would arise from the scale, style and features of the design of the dwelling.

APP/F1610/W/19/3236340 referenced in the applicants' planning statement was also of contemporary design within a National Landscape. However, the appeal included the removal of buildings. The Inspector noted in paragraph 22 of the appeal decision that the design "which included the disposition of other minor buildings" would be outstanding. In paragraph 26, the inspector noted that the land to the south is "somewhat degraded with suburban features" and the remediation of the land contributed to the enhancement of its settings. As such, whilst there are some similarities in the sense that both proposals would introduce a contemporary designed dwelling within a National Landscape, the contexts of the site are different and the application site is devoid of any structures which negatively impact on the existing character of the area.

Likewise, appeal ref: APP/M1710/W/15/3010471 and APP/L3245/W/21/3289722 are also not directly comparable as they are not located in a National Landscape designation whereby greater weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in accordance with Paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

Taking into account the above, it is not considered that the design is truly outstanding.

Would the proposal help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas:

The supporting planning statement notes that given the location of the proposed house in the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the panel included two landscape advisors, including the chair, whereas normally only one landscape architect is involved.

Notwithstanding the above, for the reasons stated previously, it is not considered that the proposal is 'truly outstanding' and the Council maintain the view that the proposed development would not help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas and would introduce incongruous features. Whilst there are positive elements to the scheme, for example the increased biodiversity net gain above the statutory requirement, the concerns raised with regards to the design features of the dwelling itself and its immediate hard landscaped gardens do not contribute to raising the standards of design in rural areas.

Would the proposal significantly enhance its immediate setting:

The previous delegated officer report notes that the existing site's character and setting has an attractive open rural feel characterised by open views across the site consisting of sloping pasture with trees at the western edge and more interspersed at the northern edge. In addition, the site is visible from a number of public vantage points including Higher Road, Forty Acre Lane, Stoneygate Lane as well as a number of public rights of way.

The Council have previously raised concerns that the proposed dwelling and landscaping, in parallel with the extent of the proposed access track and 'public car-parking' area would fundamentally alter the character of the site, with a cumulative overall level of visual change that would significantly undermine the inherent open aspect nature and visual character of the site.

The planning statement considers that Inspectors have taken the view that ecological proposals, including innovative and sustainable design, woodland management and increased biodiversity net gain above the statutory requirement, and heritage proposals, can be taken into account and afforded weight when assessing whether a scheme would significantly enhance its immediate setting.

The Council contest that the physical addition will 'enliven' the existing immediate setting for the reasons outlined earlier in this report and also contests the view of the applicant outlined in paragraph 5.41 of the submitted planning statement, that it does not appear overly domestic. The site would introduce features such as sliding access gates and domestic gardens, including a separate 'kitchen garden' which would involve segregation of the landscape, as well as a new car park and multiple new stone walls which further split the land up into defined sections.

The applicant has sought Counsel advice and considers that the landscaping is an integral part of the Growing House design and does not mean that the proposed planting should be considered solely as mitigation, in the sense of only being there to hide something that would otherwise be harmful. Instead, the integral nature of the landscaping in the design is intended to ensure that the overall composition (of combined built form and landscape appearance) is of exceptional quality. The applicants Counsel advise considers that the landscaping and the physical building of the development should not be treated as separate things and that the design is the totality of the development.

Whilst the Council note that the intention is that the landscaping forms part of the design of development as a whole, it is clear from the siting of proposed landscaping an element of this is to 'mitigate' any harm arising from the development. For example, the proposed native tree planting and hedgerows along the access road, as shown in drawing ref: '12870-LUC-XX-00-DR-L-0101 Rev P01' which 'provides screening to views from the south and east'. Again, when viewing the proposed additional tree planting and native scrub mix planting along the northern and eastern boundary of the site, it is unclear how these features form part of the integral design of the scheme rather than to act as mitigation to screen the development from views within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) states that planting has predominantly been designed to create an improved landscape setting to ensure that the dwelling is assimilated into the receiving landscape. In addition, the LVIA also considers that the proposed landscaping would assist in the contextual framing and filtering of views from visual receptors using landscape features aligned to the characteristics of the National Landscape. However, the Council still consider that the introduction of the dwelling along with the proposed landscaping including new tree and hedgerow planting would lose the sense of open pastureland which is a positive characteristic. When read in context with the significant scale and footprint of the built form proposed and extents of access track and car park it will result in a perceivable significant measurable visual suburbanisation of the site.

Taking account of the above, it is considered that the cumulative extent and level of visual change to the character of the site resultant from the proposed built form and additional landscaping, would result in a proposal that would fail to enhance its immediate setting. Particularly insofar that the cumulative level of visual change proposed would fundamentally alter the visual character of the site to a degree whereby, when read in context with the character of the immediate area, would represent a strident incongruous form of development that would undermine the inherent character and visual amenities of the area and the inherent character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape in this location.

As such, it is not considered that the landscaping features (in particular tree/scrub planting) provide a significant enhancement to the immediate setting of the site.

The applicant also considers that the Council did not treat biodiversity as a meaningful benefit of the scheme as it should have done. They consider that ecological considerations are an essential part of the design of the Growing House and a clear benefit of the proposal. Reference is made within the applicants planning statement to paragraph 24 of the appeal decision of appeal ref: APP/M1710/W/15/3010471 where the Inspector notes that the appeal scheme would ensure that part of the site would develop a more natural habitat and would significantly enhance the setting.

Similarly, with regards to paragraph 14 of appeal decision ref: APP/L1765/W/22/3291091, the Inspector notes that “the proposal would significantly enhance biodiversity.... in a way beyond normal policy expectations as detailed in the Ecological Management Plan. Taken together, these points are sufficient to achieve a significant enhancement of the immediate setting.”

The submitted details outline that the proposed new landscaping and ecology enhancements would add area and hedgerow habitat units to achieve an on-site net gain of 19.73% and a hedgerow gain of 135.4% which they note are beyond mandatory requirements and should therefore attract greater weight than previously assessed under planning ref: 3/2025/0095.

The Council do acknowledge that the scheme would provide ecological benefits, such as the new and restored hay meadow at Fields F1, F2 and F3, additional native woodland and shrub planting to the internal facing edge of the perimeter woodland lining Cowley Brook, as well as the creation of a new pond and wetland area. However, it is the view of the Council that the biodiversity benefits to the scheme and introduction of restorative features do not significantly enhance the immediate setting of the site when taken cumulatively with all elements of design which could contribute to the setting. An example of this is appeal ref: APP/T2350/W/22/3310867 where the inspector noted that the proposal would result in a biodiversity net gain of around 35% and an increase of hedgerow, trees and new grassland. However, these were not considered to override the harm that would result from the incongruous effect that the proposed building would have on its immediate setting.

Would the proposal be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area:

The application site is defined as ‘Longridge Moorland Fringe’ (Character Area D11) within the Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment which defines the Character Area as follows:

- *This area provides the northern setting for Longridge Fell and is therefore the foreground within many views southwards from character areas to the north;*
- *The small, linear hamlet of Walker Fold at the southern boundary of this area encompasses a row of gritstone cottages, several of which have grey-painted window and door frames;*
- *Views northwards to Longridge Fell are dominated by the dense cover of coniferous woodland.*

The inherent character of the immediate area is largely characterised by open aspect agricultural land, with pockets of scattered woodland and incremental built-form typically with modest scale traditional buildings associated with or previously associated with agricultural functions undertaken on the land.

In this respect, the introduction of a residential dwelling, of the external appearance and scale proposed, along with the introduction of an uncharacteristic domestic landscaping configuration such as the access track, associated garden areas and car-parking area would fail to be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area. With the proposal representing a form and scale of development, that overall would appear incongruous and anomalous when taking account of the defining character of the immediate and wider area, which do not include such building types.

In conclusion, it is not considered that the proposal would comply with the exceptions outlined in Paragraph 84(e) of the NPPF. As such, taking account of the above matters, as per the previously refused scheme, it is considered that the proposal would result in the introduction of a form of development that fails to be in keeping with the character of the landscape or be reflective of the local vernacular, particularly in terms of scale, style and features. The proposal would result in a level of cumulative visual change that would result in an overt visual suburbanisation and domestication of the site, significantly undermining the character, visual amenities and sense of visual openness of the area, being of significant detriment to the inherent character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape in this location.

As such the proposal would be contrary to Key Statement EN2, and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the aims and objectives of Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework, also subsequently failing to satisfy the requirements of Paragraph 84(e) of the Framework.

Highways and Parking:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG3 states that:

'All development proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space in line with currently approved standards'.

In addition, Policy DMG1 states that all development must:

- '1. consider the potential traffic and car parking implications.*
- 2. ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated'.*

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) have provided comments on the scheme.

The LHA note that the site would have two new access points on to Higher Road and the current field gates would be upgraded as part of the proposal. Both the site accesses are proposed at a width of 4.5m, which they consider acceptable. One access sits to the East of the site and will serve the dwelling. The access situated to the West of the site will serve 4 new car parking spaces for visitors to see the remains of the Roman Road, which crosses the site. The LHA has reviewed drawing H4322-H-01 Rev P2, which shows a visibility splay of 2m by 56m to the Right (Eastbound) and 60m to the left (Westbound) can be achieved for the access situated to the West of the site. The visibility splay of the access to the East, which serves the dwelling, has a visibility splay of by 38m to the right (Eastbound) and 60m to the left (Westbound).

The LHA has undertaken their own assessment of the access and found that the applicant can achieve a 56m visibility splay to the right whilst this is not shown on the plan provided. The vegetation within the visibility splays shall be reduced to below 1m high. The visibility splays are based on a previous traffic count for an application at Blue Bell Farm, which lies 1.2km west of the site. The LHA has reviewed drawing 01003 titled Site Plan as Proposed and would remind the applicant that the access will need to be either ungated or with the gates set back by at least 5m from the edge of the carriageway. It is considered that had the application been recommended for approval, the gates could have amended on the proposed site plan prior to determination or amended via a planning condition. The LHA also note that the first 5m of both access points will need to be surfaced in a hard standing material and feature drainage to prevent any loose material or surface water from being deposited onto the carriageway. They note that works within the highway would need to be undertaken under an agreement with Lancashire County Council.

With regards to the level of parking, the LHA consider that the level of parking complies with the LHAs parking standards as defined in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan. There is also room to turn within the site allowing for ingress and egress in forward gear. They note that the proposal features a garage which meets the recommended internal dimensions for a double garage of 6m by 6m and as such can be considered acceptable to provide off street parking provisions. The garage also has additional space to provide secure, covered cycle storage.

Turning to the visitor car park, this is considered sufficient to accommodate 4 no. vehicles with space to turn to allow all vehicles to enter and leave Higher Lane in forward gear, which is considered necessary. The number of visitors anticipated to visit the site is not presented and is likely unknown therefore we can offer no comment upon the amount of car parking without further information.

As such, subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to comply with the above policies in relation to highway/parking matters.

Landscape/Ecology:

As per the previously refused application has been accompanied by an Arboricultural Constraints Appraisal, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Report.

Arboricultural Constraints Appraisal:

The submitted Arboricultural Constraints Appraisal identifies a number of individual trees, groupings and hedgerows within an and adjacent the proposal site. The report does not propose the removal of any of the existing vegetation save that for the recommendation that the canopy of one Common Oak (T3) be reviewed when next in full leaf to appraise its condition.

The report outlines that protective fencing could be utilised to ensure the trees would not be harmed as a result of development. This could be secured by way of planning condition.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal:

The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identifies that the proposal will not result in any measurable direct impacts upon protected species or species of conservation concern. A number of precautionary measures are suggested during the construction phase of the development, particularly given the potential for the site to act as a foraging area for wildlife, with suitable foraging habitat for badgers having been found on site including evidence of badgers on site. With Brown Hare, and roe deer also noted at the time of survey.

As per the previous application, mitigation and enhancement is proposed with provisions for building dependent species being recommended. The report suggests the installation of a minimum of four bat boxes on mature trees around the site boundaries and new buildings to provide additional roosting habitat for bats, and the proposal as a minimum should provide the following provisions:

- 2F Schwegler Bat Box
- 1FF Schwegler Bat Box
- 2FN Schwegler Bat Box
- 1FR Schwegler Bat Tube / Habitat Bat Box inserted into the fabric of the new building during construction

It is further proposed that nesting boxes be included in the building plans to add to the available nesting opportunities in the local area and the proposal as a minimum should provide the following provisions:

- Schwegler No 17 swift nest box
- Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace
- Schwegler 1B nest boxes
- Schwegler 2H Robin Boxes

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit commented on the previous application and were satisfied that no further surveys would be required prior to determination and were also satisfied that the wildlife value of the site is capable of being conserved, should permission be granted. To ensure the recommendations outlined in the submitted Preliminary Ecology Appraisal are adhered to, a construction Method Statement (Biodiversity), as well as a pre-construction site precautionary survey for badgers should be secured by way of planning condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

Pursuant to the statutory requirements of Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), the applicant is required to demonstrate that the proposal will deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.

The submitted information shows a baseline habitat of 17.92 units on site. It is proposed that these will mostly be retained, and the proposed new landscaping and ecology enhancements will add area and hedgerow habitat units to achieve an on-site net gain of 19.73% and a hedgerow gain of 135.4%

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit were previously satisfied that the site could achieve the minimum 10% biodiversity net-gain and that the long-term management and monitoring of the biodiversity net gain is secured by means of a S106 planning obligation. The use of a S106 would enable the planning authority to monitor the biodiversity gain in the long-term.

A 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan would also be required to be provided pre-commencement of any development by applying the statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition to any permission which may be granted to the scheme.

Proposed Landscaping:

The proposal has been accompanied by a Landscape Masterplan and associated details landscaping scheme. The submitted details propose areas of tree-planting, native scrub planting, native hedgerow planting, mixed native and ornamental planting including areas to accommodate species-rich hay meadow restoration which could be secured by way of planning condition.

As such and taking account of the above matters, the proposal does not raise any significant measurable conflict(s) with the statutory requirements of Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) nor Policies DME1, DME2 or DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which seek to protect against adverse impacts upon habitat, biodiversity, ecology or protected species and species of conservation concern.

Other Matters:

Heritage:

Key Statement EN5 states that:

“There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits.

This will be achieved through:

- *Recognising that the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.*
- *Keeping Conservation Area Appraisals under review to ensure that any development proposals respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of the area.*
- *Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.*
- *Requiring all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.*
- *The consideration of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights where the exercise of such rights would harm the historic environment.”*

Policy DME4 also states that:

“Alterations or extensions to listed buildings or buildings of local heritage interest, or development proposals on sites within their setting which cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset will not be supported.”

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF also states that:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

Cowley Brook Farm to the north of Land at Higher Road, Longridge is identified as a non-designated heritage asset as a post-medieval farmstead. The Growing House is proposed 140 metres south of the farm report notes that the dwelling would be at a lower contour further down the slope of the hillside. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would result in harm the setting and significance of the farm. Overall, there is no conflict with paragraph 216 of the NPPF and Policies Key Statement EN4 and DME4 of the Core Strategy on this basis.

The application includes a proposal to excavate the Roman road and the application is now supported by LiDAR data which shows the probable remains of the road agger and ditch. A section of the Roman road would become a permanent feature which would be open for the public to visit. The car parking area would be provided with a booking system for members of the public to visit the remains.

The applicant states that this element of the proposal should carry weight in favour of the proposal, particularly insofar that it would align with Paragraph 219 of the National Planning Policy Framework which encourages Local Planning Authorities to look for opportunities to ‘enhance or better reveal’ the significance of heritage assets.

Previous concerns were raised in the delegated report for planning ref: 3/2025/0095 that no details were provided in respect of the management of the car-parking area, with concerns having been raised within

received representations in respect of the potential for the car-parking area to attract anti-social behaviour. In addition, no details of a dedicated route that would facilitate pedestrian access from the car-parking area to the area of the roman-road to be exposed and preserved were provided.

This application has provided details on how the car park would be managed which demonstrates that a booking system would be utilised. No details have been presented which show clearly a pedestrian route to the sections of the Roman road that would be available for viewing. Given the sensitivity of the site and the nature of the development being sought, it is considered that this detail should have been included in the application submission to enable full assessment.

The main difference between this application and the previously refused scheme is the inclusion of LiDAR data to confirm the possible location of the remains. The inclusion of this data has removed an element of uncertainty as to whether it would be feasible. However, without details on the exact section(s) to be displayed, what exactly would be visible and means of access from the car park, and with uncertainty as to the effectiveness of a planning condition to ensure the applicant has a live booking system for the car park in place to ensure this would be accessible, the LPA remains cautious as to the actual heritage benefits of this potential attraction, and as such only affords this limited weight. Additionally, LCC Archaeology note that the excavations required for a newly proposed 'ha-ha' will inevitably damage the Roman road on the route of the ha-ha, with a potential for as-yet unknown buried remains to be affected. Whilst they do not advise against the development, this supports the LPA's cautious approach to the heritage benefits. Additionally, any heritage gain would not outweigh the harm to the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

Planning Balance and Conclusions:

As noted previously, the Council's lack of a 5 Year Housing Land Supply is a material consideration which needs to be given significant weight. With regard to NPPF paragraph 11d), harm has been identified to protected areas, namely the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

In addition, for the reasons previously outlined, the proposal is not considered fall within any of the exceptions outlined in paragraph 84 of the NPPF. As such, the proposal would result in harm to the landscape character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape whereby paragraph 189 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes.

As such, the tilted balance need not apply as the policies within the NPPF provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. Therefore, the application of policies within the NPPF indicate that planning permission should not be granted.

Further negatives to the proposal have been identified. Due to its location outside of any recognised settlement boundary and failing to fall within the exceptions outlined in paragraph 84(e) of the NPPF, the application site is not in accordance with the spatial strategy for the Borough and would be located in an unsustainable location where future occupants would be reliant on private motor vehicle.

As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised, it is not considered that re-submission as sufficiently overcome the previous reasons for refusal and this application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning consent be refused for the following reason(s).

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| 01: | The proposal would result in the introduction of a form of development that fails to be in keeping with the character of the landscape or be reflective of the local vernacular, particularly in terms of scale, style and features. With the proposal resulting in a level of cumulative visual change that would result in an overt visual suburbanisation and domestication of the site, significantly |
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	<p>undermining the character, visual amenities and sense of visual openness of the area, being of significant detriment to the inherent character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape in this location.</p> <p>As such the proposal is considered to be in significant direct conflict with Key Statement EN2, and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the aims and objectives of Para.189 of the National Planning Policy Framework, also subsequently failing to satisfy the requirements of Para.84(e) of the Framework.</p>
02:	<p>The proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that approval would lead to the creation of a new residential dwelling, located outside of a defined settlement boundary in an unsustainable location where future occupants would be reliant on private motor vehicle, without sufficient justification, in that it has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposal would meet any of the exception criterion inherently contained within the policy requirements or contained within Para.84(e) of the Framework.</p>